

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as currently amended in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 9, 15, 21, 29, 35, 41, 48, and 55 are currently active in this case. Claims 1, 21, 41, and 55 have been amended and claims 2, 22, and 56 have been cancelled by the current amendment. No new matter has been added. See page 10 line 31 – page 11 line 9 of the Specification.

In the outstanding office action, claims 1, 2, 9, 15, 21, 22, 29, 35, 41, 48, 55, and 56 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 6,542,705 to Fujita et al.

Claim 1 as amended defines a fixing device for fixing an image formed on a recording medium, including: a fixing member arranged on a recording medium conveying path; a pressing member configured to press-contact the fixing member; a heat source configured to heat the fixing member; a storage device configured to supply power to the heat source; and a control device configured to change an amount of power supplied from the storage device to the heat source when the temperature of the fixing member falls below a first reference temperature based on an elapsed time since a start of image formation and further configured to change the amount of power supplied from the storage device to the heat source when the temperature of the fixing member falls below a second reference temperature during a time period after the elapsed time.

For a first image forming operation, the temperature of the fixing member rapidly drops from a temperature after start of the image forming processing. (See e.g., FIG. 3) Then, the control device changes an amount of power supplied from the storage device to the heat source at a predetermined elapsed time since a start of image formation when the temperature falls below a second reference temperature TA to keep the temperature of the fixing member within a suitable range.

For the following image forming operation after the elapsed time, the present invention provides a lower (second) reference temperature TB than the first reference temperature at the elapsed time from a start of image formation. During a time period after the elapsed time, the control device changes an amount of power supplied from the storage

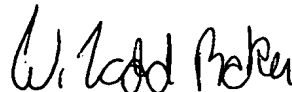
device to the heat source when the temperature of the fixing member falls below the second reference temperature.

The official action asserts on page 4 that the Fujita et al. patent discloses a temperature detecting device 13 configured to detect a temperature of the fixing member and a control device configured to compare the temperature of the fixing member with a reference temperature. Applicants point out, however, that Fujita et al. fail to teach or suggest the first and second reference temperature feature of the present invention which reduces the likelihood of a fixing failure.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the 35 USC 102(b) rejection. No further issues remaining, Applicants respectfully request an early and favorable action.

Respectfully submitted,

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